

University of Toronto-Scarborough, Social Sciences

Women and Health, Past and Present

Anne-Emanuelle Birn, Sc.D.
Associate Professor
Email: ae.birn@utoronto.ca

HLTCO2H3 Fall 2003
Wednesdays, 1-3pm
Room H-308

Office hours: Wednesdays 3-5pm and by appointment
Office Location: B402
Phone: 416-287-7322 (no messages; please email instead)

Summary

This seminar course uses historical, anthropological, philosophical, and political approaches to further understanding of the relationships intertwining women, health, and society. Women's interactions with the health sector will be examined in a variety of contexts: as bodies, patients, healers, research subjects, researchers, family members, sexual beings, activists, workers, and policy-makers. Particular attention will be devoted to the social and gender construction of disease and the politics of women's health.

Objectives

1. To become familiar with a sample of recent and classic scholarship on women and health care.
2. To increase the ability to think critically about basic assumptions and conceptual frameworks in analyzing women's health issues, past and present.
3. To develop the ability to view contemporary problems in historical perspective.
4. To develop skills in oral discussion and debate and in research and writing skills.

Organization and Evaluation

This course is organized around weekly seminars; all students are expected to have read the assignments and to participate actively in class discussion, including days when assignments are due. Each week one or more students will be responsible for stimulating class discussion. Presenters will be given five to ten minutes to raise discussion questions but should **not** simply summarize the readings. The presenters should also bring copies of a one-page list of discussion points for the members of the class. Discussion points may include criticisms, disagreements, support, and queries of the readings.

In addition, there will be three written assignments:

- 1) Plan, conduct, transcribe, and assess an hour-long interview with a friend, colleague, or family member regarding a women's health issue. This assignment is due at the beginning of class October 8, 2003.
- 2) Write a 10-15 page research paper on a historical or contemporary 'women and health' topic. Students must discuss their paper topics with me **by** October 1, 2003. The first draft of the paper (including a well-developed bibliography) is due at the beginning of class October 29, 2003.
- 3) The final draft of the paper is due at the beginning of class November 26, 2003.

These assignments will be discussed in greater detail during the course of the semester.

Students are encouraged to consult the UTSC Teaching and Learning Services website at: <http://tls.utoronto.ca/students/default.htm>

Grades will be based upon the following elements:

General class participation	20%
Leading Class Discussion	10%
Women's health interview	20%
First Draft of paper	20%
Final Draft of paper	30%

Email/Intranet

All students must have a working e-mail address and check it regularly (i.e., 2-3 times per week). Unless announced otherwise, I will generally be able to respond to your emails within 24 hours.

As the semester progresses, I will post assignments, announcements, and discussion points on the UTSC Intranet site for the course. Please check the course intranet site frequently.

Reading Packet

Please purchase the reading packet at the UTSC bookstore.

Class Sessions

1. September 10. Gender and health theory

- Peggy McDonough and Vivienne Walters, "Gender and Health: Reassessing Patterns and Explanations" Social Science and Medicine, 52: 547-559, 2001.
- Elizabeth Fee, "Women and Health Care: A Comparison of Theories," International Journal of Health Services, 5, 1975, pp. 397-415.
- Emily Martin, "Medical Metaphors of Women's Bodies: Menstruation and Menopause," in The Woman in the Body, Boston: Beacon Press, 1992, pp. 27-53.

2. September 17. Women's health as a movement

- Judy Norsigian et al. "The Boston Women's Health Book Collective and Our Bodies Ourselves: A Brief History and Reflection," Women and Health. Power, Technology, Inequality and Conflict in a Gendered World, Kathryn Strother Ratcliff, ed. Boston: Allyn and Bacon Press, 2002.
- Sandra Morgen, "On Their Own: Women of Color and the Health Movement" and "The Changer and the Changed: The Women's Health Movement, Doctors, and Organized Medicine" in Into Our Own Hands. The Women's Health Movement in the United States, 1969-1990, New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2002, Chapters 3 and 6.

3. September 24. Traditional and modern healers

- Dena Carroll and Cecilia Benoit "Aboriginal Midwifery in Canada: Blending Ancient Traditions and Emerging Forms." Canadian Women's Health Network, 2001, Vol. 4 (3): 6-7.
- Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, A Midwife's Tale. The Life of Martha Ballard, Based on her Diary, 1785-1812, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1990. pp.37-71
- Santi Rozario and Geoffrey Samuel, The Daughters of Hariti. Childbirth and Female Healers in South and Southeast Asia, Routledge, 2002 Chapter 3, pp.70- 89.
- Darlene Clark Hine. "Reflections on Nurse Rivers," Tuskegee's Truths. Rethinking the Tuskegee Syphilis Study, Susan Reverby, ed. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000, pp. 386-395.
- "Vanessa Northington Gamble, "On Becoming a Physician: A Dream Not Deferred," The Black Women's Health Book, Evelyn White, ed. SEAL, 1994, pp.52-64.
- Kathryn McPherson, Bedside Matters: The Transformation of Canadian Nursing, 1900-1990, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1996, Chapter 1.

4. October 1.

Women as patients and research subjects

Deadline for meeting with Professor Birn on paper topic

- Kaja Finkler, "Gender and the Nature of Sickness," and "Maria: Out of the Frying Pan and Into the Fire," in Women in Pain: Gender and Morbidity in Mexico, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994, pp. 40-50 and 191-202.
- Sue Wilkinson and Celia Kitzinger, "Towards a Feminist Approach to Breast Cancer," in Women and Health: Feminist Perspectives, London: Taylor and Francis, 1994, pp. 124-140.
- Jill Astbury, "Mental Health: Gender Bias, Social Position and Depression," in Engendering International Health: The Challenge of Equity, Gita Sen, Asha George and Pirooska Ostlin, eds. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002, pp. 143-166.
- Marian Gray Secundy, "Ethical Issues in Research" in Health Issues for Women of Color. A Cultural Diversity Perspective, Diane Adams, ed. London: SAGE Publications, 1995, pp. 228-238.
- Sue Rosser, "Androcentric Bias in Clinical Research," in Women's Health-Missing from the U.S. Medicine, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994. pp.3-15.

5. October 8. Women as vessels: fertility ideologies & population politics

Interview paper due at the beginning of class

- Anne-Emanuelle Birn, "Skirting the Issue: Women and International Health in Historical Perspective," American Journal of Public Health, vol.89, No.3, 1999, pp.399-407.
- Valerie Hartouni. "Containing Women: Reproductive Discourse(s) in the 1980s," in Cultural Conceptions on Reproductive Technologies and the Remaking of Life, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997, pp.26-50.
- Lara Marks, "The Population Problem and the Pill," in Sexual Chemistry: a History of the Pill, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001, pp.13-40.
- Amartya Sen, "Population: Delusion and Reality," The Gender and Sexuality Reader, Lancaster and di Leonardo, eds. Routledge, 1997, pp. 89-106.
- You should also peruse the materials on this website:
<http://www.paho.org/english/DPM/GPP/GH/GenderBrochure.pdf>

Film: "La Operación"

6. October 15. Reproductive and birthing technologies

- Malcolm Gladwell, "John Rock's Error" The New Yorker, Mar 13, 2000, pp. 52-63.
- Susan Rigdon, "Abortion Law and Practice in China: An Overview with Comparisons to the United States," Social Science and Medicine, Vol. 42, No.4, 1996 pp. 543- 560.
- Rayna Rapp, "XYLO: A True Story," in Test-tube Women: What Future for Motherhood? Ardith, Klein and Mindin, eds., Pandora Press, 1984, pp. 313-328.
- Jessica Mitford, "Fashions in Childbirth," The American Way of Birth, Dutton, 1992, pp. 51-73.
- Rona Achilles: "Desperately Seeking Babies: New Technologies of Hope and Despair," Delivering Motherhood. Maternal Ideologies and Practices in the 19th and 20th Centuries, in Katherine Arnup, Andree Levesque and Ruth Roach Pierson, eds. London: Routledge, 1990, pp. 284-312.

7. October 22. Lesbians/bisexuals and health

- Ilan H. Meyer, "Why Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Public Health?" American Journal of Public Health, June 2001, vol.91, No.6, pp.856-859.
- Leslie Feinberg, "Trans Health Crisis: For Us It's Life or Death," American Journal of Public Health, June 2001, vol.91, No.6, pp.897-900.
- Patricia E. Stevens and Joanne M. Hall, "A Critical Historical Analysis of the Medical Construction of Lesbianism," in Women's Health, Politics, and Power: Essays on Sex/Gender, Medicine and Public Health, Elizabeth Fee and Nancy Krieger, eds., Amityville, NY: Baywood Publishers, 1994, pp. 233-251.

8. October 29. Motherhood, maternalism and mothering advice **First draft of paper due at the beginning of class**

- Seth Koven and Sonya Michel, eds. Mothers of a New World. Maternalist Politics and the Origins of Welfare States, Routledge, 1993, Introduction, pp. 1-42.
- Patricia Hill Collins, "Will the Real Mother Please Stand Up? The Logic of Eugenics and American National Family Planning," Revisioning Women, Health and Healing, Adele Clarke and V, Olesen, eds., Routledge, 1999, pp. 266-282.
- Cynthia Comacchio. 'Nations are Built of Babies.' Saving Ontario's Mothers and Children 1900-1940, McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993, Chapter 4.

- Valerie Fildes, “Maternal Breastfeeding: The Incidence and Practice of Maternal Breastfeeding” Breasts, Bottles and Babies, Edinburgh University Press, 1986, pp. 98-133.
- Christopher R. Keane, “Managerial Hegemony, Cultural Change, and the Transformation of Infant Care Advice in the United States in the Twentieth Century,” International Journal of Health Services, Vol.31, No.1, 2001, pp.167-186.

9. November 5. Women and human rights

- Canadian Feminist Alliance for International Action, Canada’s Failure to Act: Women’s Inequality Deepens 2003, pp.2-10.
- Nawal El Saadawi, “Women and Health in the Arab World,” Why Keep Asking Me About My Identity? Zed Books, 1997, pp.53-64.
- Claudia Garcia-Moreno, “Violence Against Women: Consolidating a Public Health Agenda,” in Engendering International Health, op. cit., pp. 111-141.
- “Sharia Law” The Guardian Unlimited Tuesday August 20, 2002.
- Alison M. Jaggar, “Vulnerable Women and Neoliberal Globalization: Debt Burdens Undermine Women’s Health in the Global South,” in Recognition, Responsibility and Rights. Feminist Ethics and Social Theory. Robin Fiore and Hilde Lindemann Nelson, eds. New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2003, pp. 195-209.
- Elizabeth H. Boyle, Female Genital Cutting. Cultural Conflict in the Global Community. John Hopkins Univ. Press. 2002, Chapters 2 and 3.

10. November 12. Race, gender and health

- Marsha Lillie-Blanton et al., "Latina and African American Women: Continuing Disparities in Health," International Journal of Health Services, 23 (3), 1993, pp. 555-584.
- Nancy Krieger and Elizabeth Fee, "Man-Made Medicine and Women's Health: The Biopolitics of Sex/Gender and Race/Ethnicity," International Journal of Health Services, 24 (2), 1994, pp. 265-283.
- Sandra Morgen, “The Politics of Race and Class: Dreams of Diversity, Dilemmas of Difference” in Into Our Own Hands, op. cit., pp. 206-231.

11. November 19. Women and work

- Charlotte Perkins Gilman, “The Home: Its Work and Influence,” The Politics of Housework, Ellen Malos, ed. 1980 (reprinted), pp. 72-82.
- Pirooska Ostlin, “Examining work and its effects on health,” in Engendering International Health, op. cit., pp. 63-81

- Janet Gornick, et al. "Supporting the Employment of Mothers: Policy Variation Across Fourteen Welfare States." Journal of European Social Policy, 1997 vol. 7 (1) pp. 45-70.
- Pamela Moss and Isabel Dyck, "Material bodies precariously positioned. Women Embodying Chronic Illness in the Workplace," Geographies of Women's Health, Isabel Dyck, Nancy Davis Lewis, and Sara McLafferty, eds. London: Routledge, 2001, pp. 231-247.

12. November 26. Gender, health reform and current policy
Final paper due at the beginning of class

- Karen Scott Collins, et al., "Health Concerns Across a Woman's Lifespan: The Commonwealth Fund 1998 Survey of Women's Health," New York, May 1999.
- Pat Armstrong and Hugh Armstrong, Women, Privatization and Health Reform: The Ontario Case, Toronto: NNEWH 1999, passim.
- Ruth Levine, Amanda Glassman and Miriam Schneidman, The Health of Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, Washington, D.C.: The World Bank, 2001. Overview, Chapters 2 and 3, pp. 7-14, 33-53.
- Anne Rochon Ford, Biotechnology and the New Genetics: What it Means for Women's Health, Toronto: Working Group on Women, Health and the New Genetics, 2000.